

Duprasi or Fat-Tailed Gerbils

What are they?

Duprasi (*Pachyuromys duprasi*) are a species of gerbil that is very different to the Mongolian Gerbil normally kept as a pet in this country. They are smaller, flatter, move differently and have a very unusual tail. They come from sandy deserts of Egypt and other parts of North Africa. They have to survive with limited access to both food and water. This is one of the reasons they have evolved to store fat in their short stumpy tail. This is very like the way a camel stores fat in its hump.

How do I keep them?

In general they can be kept just like Mongolian Gerbils. They are best kept in a tank where they can burrow. They like to have a jar, or series of jars in which they can sleep. They will eat the same food as other gerbils. They sometimes like to have insects like mealworms or crickets added to their diet but this is not essential. Although they do not drink much, like all gerbils it is best to always give them access to water. Their fur is very fine and they can get very sweaty looking, especially when humidity is high. It is best to give them the opportunity to bath in chinchilla sand every few days to help them keep their fur in good condition.



Do they behave like normal Gerbils?

Duprasi are quite different to Mongolian Gerbils in their behaviour. Whilst they are still inquisitive they are very docile and easy to handle, they are much more like hamsters in the way they move about and their more nocturnal habits. Groups of Duprasi will often live together without trouble but they will sometimes squabble. This can lead to bullying with the tails of bullied animals being bitten. Often bullying can be resolved by giving each Duprasi their own jar to nest in. A mated pair of Duprasi will produce litters about the same size as normal Mongolian Gerbil litters. The gestation period and development of the young is also very similar.

What colours are available?

In the wild the colour of Duprasi varies from place to place depending on the colour of the ground on which they live. The animals in captivity are normally a light sandy-gold colour. In Japan a grey mutation, very much like the Grey Agouti variety of the Mongolian Gerbil. But no other colours have appeared.

Where can I get Duprasi?

Contact the National Gerbil Society who may be able to put you in touch with a specialist breeder who has some available.

Where can I get more information?

The Internet is one of the best places for information on all exotic species of gerbils.

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Distributed by The National Gerbil Society, 373 Lynmouth Ave, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4RY

- jackie@gerbils.co.uk - www.gerbils.co.uk